

DRAFT MINUTES

**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING
DOWNTOWN MANCHESTER SPECIAL SERVICES DISTRICT**

**October 1, 2008
6:00 PM**

**OFFICE OF
THE DOWNTOWN MANCHESTER SPECIAL SERVICES DISTRICT
983 MAIN STREET SUITE 10
MANCHESTER, CT 06040**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Ed Firestone, Chair
John Tunila
Don Dubaldo
Michael Esposito

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS
PRESENT: Sue O'Connor, Pres., GMCC

STAFF PRESENT: Tana Parseliti, Downtown Manager
Sabina K. Wilson, Administrative Assistant

ALSO PRESENT: none

MEMBERS ABSENT: Glenda Sinnamon
Betsy Treiber
Hope Igdalsky
Rev.Mancini

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS
ABSENT: Mark Pellegrini, Dir., Planning & Neighborhood Services

Call to Order

Mr. Firestone called the meeting to order at 6:05 PM.

Minutes – September 4, 2008

Mr. Tunila moved to accept the minutes as written. Mr. Esposito seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously (4-0-0)

Resolution To Accept Funds

Mr. Dubaldo moved to accept the motion as written. Mr. Esposito seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously (4-0-0).

Marketing & Promotions

Website Redesign – Chris Baten attended the Board of Commissioners meeting to explain the features of the redesigned DMSSD Website. Ms. Parseliti provided Mr. Baten with a list of additional changes to be made to the site. A page for the Board of Commissioners Minutes will be added so that the DMSSD will be compliant with new legislation that requires commission minutes to be posted within 7 days of each meeting. Commission suggested that a Contact Us page be added that links directly to the DMSSD

email account and a page for the Downtown Newsletter, Mr. Baten hopes to have the additions and corrections made by October 6, 2008. The Commissioners were pleased with the site. They suggested that Ms. Parseliti look into the possibility of selling advertising on the site to generate additional income. She will check with the town to determine if that is allowed. Mr. Baten will provide Ms. Parseliti and Ms. Wilson with training so that they may maintain the site and keep it updated.

Downtown Guide Distribution – Ms. Parseliti reported to the commissioners that 15,000 updated Downtown Guides were published. The Downtown Guide has been distributed to all of the Downtown businesses and within the next week the DMSSD will be moving into Phase II of the distribution. Additional Guides will be distributed to 30 high traffic locations including apartment complexes, hotels, and local tourist attractions.

Film Festival Proposal - Downtown business owner Justin Morales of Cool Hand Pictures is seeking support for a Manchester Film Festival. A description of the proposed festival was included with the meeting materials. The Commission discussed the proposal and decided that they would support the idea and help with contacts but could not put any resources into this project.

Halloween Happenings – Ms. Parseliti reported to the Commission that Halloween Happenings would take place on Sat. Oct. 25. Activities will include: a magic show at the library, pumpkin decorating sponsored by the Manchester Antiques Marketplace & Botticello Farms, a Downtown Trick-or-Treat and costume parade. New this year will be “Chalk the Walk” at Center Park sponsored by the Manchester Arts Commission. The Manchester Arts Commission will run this portion of the event. Adults and children may create fall-themed chalk art on the sidewalk of Center Park. There will be music and food. The Commission felt this was a nice addition to the event. Ms. Parseliti will send a letter out to the Downtown businesses regarding the Halloween Happenings.

SHARE Project – Ms. Parseliti reported that the SHARE Project is moving forward with a brochure under development that highlights historic, arts, cultural, recreational and educational assets in South Manchester including the Downtown. Grant funding is being investigated. A kick-off is planned for June of 2009.

Public Safety

Ms. Parseliti reported that NewAlliance has agreed to pay for the Downtown Substation rent through June of 2009. Ms. Parseliti will be sending a thank you letter to New Alliance on behalf of the Commission. The Commission discussed whether additional publicity should be sought for the donation of funds by both NewAlliance and Full Gospel Interdenominational Church. Ms. Parseliti will explore this idea with Ms. Treiber and report back to the Commission.

Community Policing Report – Sergeant John Wilson attended the meeting. He reported that, at present, the police are focusing resources on Spruce St. and on the area around the library. With the retirement of Officer Scarchuck, Downtown does not have an officer walking the Downtown beat on a regular basis. Sgt. Wilson has been walking the Downtown as time permits to fill that gap.

The new PAR officer is Jason Wagner. Sgt. Wilson will bring him to the next commission meeting that he attends. Sergeant Wilson will plan to attend the commission meetings on a quarterly basis to report on community policing activity.

Sgt Wilson asked that all the businesses post a “no soliciting” sign in their window or on their door. This will help the police to enforce no soliciting. If there is no sign, solicitors have every right to walk into any business.

Finally, Sgt. Wilson reported that he is initiating a telephone outreach program whereby volunteers will call downtown business to determine if they have any issues they would like to report or if they would like an officer to stop in. This is viewed as friendly outreach by the community police. It will not replace the police walking etc. This effort should start within the next month. Ms. Parseliti will update the businesses so that they are aware of this new community policing outreach program.

Economic Development

New Business Openings - Ms Parseliti reported that two new businesses have opened:

- Bertrand Health & Wellness, at 983 Main St. Suite 9, a personal training business.
- Uniquely Yours at 811 Main St., a gift shop featuring hand crafted gift items made in CT.

Tippling Fee Waiver - The Board of Directors is considering a waiver of Manchester landfill tipping fees for the disposal of bulky waste generated in conjunction with a rehabilitation or building renovation project in the downtown Manchester central business district. The administration recommends that the Board adopt an amendment to the Downtown Manchester Development Incentive Program. The Incentive Program was adopted by the Board in April 2005 and is intended to encourage substantial investment in properties in the Manchester Special Services District. The tipping fee rebate incentive could be added to that program’s existing personal and real property tax agreement provisions and would be consistent with the intent of the program as adopted by the Board. A copy of the proposed amendment was distributed to all commissioners. The board of commissioners endorsed the amendment as presented. Ms. Parseliti will forward a letter of support to the general manager.

Parking & Maintenance

Fall Clean up – The Gateway Garden has been planed with mums, kale and grasses for the fall season. All the summer flowers have been removed from the pots and saucers. The two big saucers have been planted with mums and kale. Ms. Parseliti reported that a little more work was being done this fall, as the Downtown was looking a little shabby. Daylilies are being removed from planted areas. A weed barrier will be put down and then the area will be mulched for a neater appearance and easier maintenance which is expected to reduce the cost of weeding during the summer months and stay more attractive all during the spring, summer and fall. The roses from the Gateway Garden have been transplanted to the Forest Street Lot area along with some burning bushes. These changes have made the area more attractive and cleaner looking. These projects will continue during the fall clean up.

Status of Alleyway Repair – Ms. Parseliti reported that Heritage Condo Assoc. has been working to coordinate the completion of repairs to the vault and alley located between the Cheney Block building and Heritage Place. CL&P recently notified them that an additional engineering study is necessary. The condition of the alleyway has generated some negative feedback from the general public. Ms. Parseliti suggested coordinating with a local school or arts organization to paint a mural on the plywood to improve the look of the fencing until the repairs can be affected. Cost would include adding some plywood and the cost of paints. The Commission endorsed Ms. Parseliti’s suggestion. She will contact the Heritage Condo Assoc. to obtain their approval to move forward.

Administration

FY 2009-2010 Budget Planning – Ms. Parseliti asked the Commission for some input on how they felt she should approach the budget planning process during this difficult financial time. All the commissioners felt that Ms. Parseliti’s has always tried to provide a frugal budget. They felt that during this time there should be no tax increase. They will consider accessing the fund balance if necessary to ensure no increase.

Dr. Glickman – Ms. Parseliti reported that Dr. Gena Glickman, the new MCC president, will attend the November 5, 2008 Commission Meeting. The Commission is looking forward to meeting her.

Public Comment – none

Other Business - none

Adjourn

There being no further business Mr. Tunila moved to adjourn the October 1, 2008 Board of Commissioners Meeting at 7:30 p.m., Mr. Esposito seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously (4-0-0)

Respectfully Submitted,

Sabina K. Wilson, Administrative Assistant
Downtown Manchester Special Services District
Recorder